

# Education Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

**Bill No.:** HB-5435

AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PLAN FOR THE  
CONVERSION OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TO AN ADVISORY

**Title:** BOARD WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION.

**Vote Date:** 3/20/2024

**Vote Action:** Joint Favorable Substitute

**PH Date:** 3/13/2024

**File No.:**

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## **SPONSORS OF BILL:**

Education Committee

## **REASONS FOR BILL:**

This bill will require the development of a plan to move the State Board of Education from a department head to an advisory board within the Department of Education, as well as authorize the Commissioner of Education to become the department head, by January 1, 2027. Under current law, the Commissioner acts as secretary to the State Board of Education, unlike commissioners of other state agencies. This shift would eliminate the need for the Commissioner to gain approval from the State Board of Education.

## **SUBSTITUTE LANGUAGE:**

The substitute language extends the date by which the commissioner must propose a plan from January 1, 2025 to January 1, 2027.

## **RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:**

[\*State Department of Education \(SCDE\), Commissioner, Charlene M. Russell-Tucker:\*](#) supports this bill, citing that commissioners are usually entrusted to make certain decisions that are currently under the State Board of Education purview. The Commissioner expressed the need for ample time for effective transfer of duties and responsibilities.

## **NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:**

**[Special Education Equity for Kids in Connecticut \(SEEK\), Legislative Chair, Andrew Feinstein:](#)** supports this bill, expressing that the Board has only impeded the process and this would promote efficiency, under the caveat that public periodic reporting should be required by the Commissioner.

**[Connecticut Education Association \(CEA\), President, Kate Dias:](#)** is in support of the State Board of Education shifting to an advisory board predominantly because there are no requirements for the State Board of Education to have educator appointees, resulting in perspectives coming from the manufacturing industry and of agriculture.

#### **NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:**

**[Decoding Dyslexia CT, Founder, Allison Quirion:](#)** opposes the bill, citing concern with checks and balances and the Commissioner holding full authority without oversight. If the bill is moved forward, she recommends an educational ombudsman to ensure independent, unbiased oversight.

***The following additional individuals submitted testimony in opposition to this bill:***

**[Carol Von Achen](#)**  
**[Susan Bradford](#)**

**Reported by: Carla Galaise**

**Date: 4/4/24**